

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3713

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: SOARES LETTER TO COSTA GOMES MADE PUBLIC

SUMMARY: SOCIALIST LEADER SOARES SENT LETTER TO PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AUGUST 7 APPEALING TO PRESIDENT NOT TO APPROVE PROPOSED FIFTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. LETTER WAS MADE PUBLIC AUGUST 8 FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BY PRESIDENT. SOARES LEVELLED STRONG ATTACK AGAINST VASCO GONCALVES SAYING GOVERNMENT UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP WOULD BE MINORITY GOVERNMENT WHICH COULD NOT DEAL WITH URGENT PROBLEMS FACING NATION. SUCH GOVERNMENT, IT SAID, COULD NOT SURVIVE FOR MORE THAN SHORT PERIOD WITHOUT RESORT TO FORCE. LETTER CONCLUDED WITH APPEAL FOR PRESIDENT TO TAKE LEAD IN WORKING OUT "COMMON POLITICAL PLAN." SOARES LETTER COUPLED WITH THAT OF MELO ANTUNES AND AFM "MODERATES," INDICATES THAT BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY MODERATES HAVE JOINED

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HANDS IN ALL-OUT EFFORT, WHICH THEY TERM "A FIGHT TO THE END."

END SUMMARY

1. SOCIALIST (PS) LEADER SOARES SENT OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AUGUST 7 URGING PRESIDENT NOT TO APPROVE LEFTIST COMPOSITION OF PROPOSED FIFTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. LETTER MADE PUBLIC TODAY, AUGUST 8, FOLLOWING FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW GOVERNMENT. LETTER APPEALED IN STRONG, DIRECT LANGUAGE TO PRESIDENT TO INTERVENE TO REVERSE LEFTWARD MOVEMENT. SOARES SAID HE WAS SPEAKING NOT ONLY IN NAME OF PS BUT FOR ALL PORTUGUESE CITIZENS SINCE NORMAL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION HAD BEEN EITHER EXHAUSTED OR IGNORED. HIGHLIGHTS OF LETTER INCLUDED:

- PORTUGAL WAS NEAR ABYSS.
- NEW GOVERNMENT TO BE ANNOUNCED WOULD BE GOVERNMENT OF EXTREME MINORITY, WITHOUT CREDIBILITY, WHICH REPRESENTED NO MORE THAN EIGHTEEN PERCENT OF THE PORTUGUESE ELECTORATE. IT WOULD BE GOVERNMENT, IF NOT OF OUTRIGHT COMMUNISTS, OF CRYPTO-COMMUNISTS.
- PRESIDENT COULD NOT ARGUE THAT HE LACKED POWER TO RESIST FORMATION OF SUCH GOVERNMENT. OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ALL OVER NATION WERE PREPARED TO GO INTO THE STREETS IN MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION OF WILL, WHICH WOULD CONFER UPON COSTA GOMES THE NECESSARY STRENGTH AND AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE A TRUE "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL SALVATION."
- PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES WAS AS WEDDED TO POWER AS SALAZAR. HE WAS INCAPABLE OF RESOLVING THE GRAVE PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY -- ANGOLA, THE AZORES, THE ECONOMY. WITH GONCALVES, COUNTRY WAS HEADED FOR A "SOCIALISM OF MISERY."
- WHAT AT ISSUE WAS TWO DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION: ONE WHICH WAS DEMOCRATIC, OTHER TOTALITARIAN. MINORITY GOVERNMENT OF GONCALVES INEVITABLY LED TO THE SECOND. SUCH GOVERNMENT COULD NOT SURVIVE FOR MORE THAN SHORT PERIOD, WITHOUT RESORT TO REPRESSION.
- REPRESSION WOULD ONLY GENERATE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF VIOLENCE.
- COMMUNIST MILITARY DICTATORSHIP WAS NOT VIABLE IN PORTUGAL.

3. LETTER CONCLUDED WITH QUESTION TO PRESIDENT: IS IT STILL POSSIBLE FOR US TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING? SOARES CALLED FOR AGREEMENT ON A "COMMON POLITICAL PLAN" TO OVERCOME CURRENT CRISIS AND SAVE THE REVOLUTION. ONLY THE PRESIDENT, HE SAID, COULD IMPOSE A "SOLUTION OF GOOD SENSE."

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4. COMMENT: SOARES LETTER, COMBINED WITH THAT OF MELO ANTUNES AND AFM "MODERATES," SHOWS THAT MODERATE CIVILIANS ARE JOINING MILITARY IN WHAT THEY ARE PRIVATELY CALLING A FIGHT TO THE FINISH. SOARES "OFFER" TO PUT PEOPLE IN THE STREETS TO SUPPORT AN EFFORT BY THE PRESIDENT TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT IS NOT AN IDLE STATEMENT.

5. SOARES AND MELO ANTUNES ACTIONS HAVE BEEN COORDINATED DURING ENTIRE CRISIS. THEY INITIALLY FAILED IN THEIR OBJECTIVE TO FORESTALL THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT. BUT THEY HAVE GENERATED CONSIDERABLE PRESSUR AGAINST GONCALVES AND HIS ALLIES ON THE LEFT.
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